

respect, trust, and integrity. We can conceive of peace as a tool to tap the infinite capabilities of humanity to transform consciousness and conditions that impel or compel violence at a personal, group, or national level, toward creating understanding, compassion, and love.

My fellow colleagues, join me in honoring the Commission on Catholic Community Action, as they celebrate the 25th anniversary of their Annual Peace and Justice Awards Dinner.

TRIBUTE TO MICHAEL MELE AS HE CELEBRATES HIS 100TH BIRTHDAY

HON. ROSA L. DeLAURO

OF CONNECTICUT

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 14, 2006

Ms. DELAURO. Mr. Speaker, it is with great pleasure that I rise today to join family and friends in wishing Michael Mele the very best as he celebrates a remarkable milestone—his 100th birthday! Marking a century of hard work and dedication, today's celebration will give Michael, or Ozi Mike as he is affectionately known by family and close friends, and his loved ones the opportunity to reflect on the many accomplishments he has achieved throughout his life as well as how he has touched all of their lives.

A gifted vocalist, dedicated husband and father, devoted parishioner, army veteran, and professional technician, Michael is a man of many talents that he has shared with hundreds over the course of his life. Born and raised in New Haven, Connecticut, Michael has led a fascinating life. Upon graduating from high school, he studied voice for ten years during which time he became an accomplished tenor. Michael sang in productions of such classics as *The Barber of Seville* and *Pagliacci* and, though the relocation of the production to California prevented him from taking the part, he even won a lead role opposite Betty Grable in the movie musical *Down Argentine Way*. During his time with the theater, Michael also won roles in several New York productions, including *An American Comedy* and *The Family Portrait*.

After marrying his wife, Carmel, in 1942, the couple raised two children, sons Michael and Robert. He served in the United States Army during World War II where he received training as a dental technician, a profession in which he was employed until he was hired by Winchester/Olin as a lab technician, retiring in 1971. Throughout his life, Michael has held a unique devotion to his faith and his church. Michael shared his gift for singing with a variety of Catholic churches throughout New Haven. He directed glee clubs, choirs, and sang as a soloist at St. Ann's, St. Rose's, St. Brendan's, St. Donato's, and Our Lady of Mount Carmel in Hamden. In fact, his lifetime of dedicated efforts were recognized by the Church when Archbishop Daniel Cronin awarded him the prestigious Saint Joseph Award—the archdiocesan medal of appreciation for outstanding parishioners.

An active and inspiring retiree, Michael has continued to dedicate his time to his church as well as a new found passion for horse-riding.

What began—at age seventy-seven—with a gift certificate for riding lessons and later—at age eighty—a saddle, has blossomed into a beloved hobby. In fact, for a decade after he began riding, he spent his summers at the Bitter Root ranch in the mountains of northwest Wyoming. At 100 years old, Michael is a living treasure—he still rides, drives a car, maintains his own home, attends daily Mass, serves on the altar, and is finishing his twenty-sixth year as a fourth grade religious education teacher. He is even working on his autobiography which I have no doubt will be a real page-turner!

Today, as Michael celebrates his 100th birthday, I have no doubt that he will look back in wonder at the fascinating events that have brought him to this moment. In the last century he has witnessed some of the most important moments in world history and, through his own efforts, has left an indelible mark on the lives of all those who have known him. It is my privilege to rise today to join his sons Michael and Robert, as well as the many family and friends who have gathered in extending my heartfelt congratulations to Michael Mele on his 100th birthday. This is a very special day for all of those fortunate enough to know Michael. My very best wishes for many more years of health and happiness. **HAPPY BIRTHDAY!**

RECOGNIZING WWII VETERAN AND POW RAY KNISLEY, JR. OF CHIEFLAND, FLORIDA

HON. GINNY BROWN-WAITE

OF FLORIDA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 14, 2006

Ms. GINNY BROWN-WAITE of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise to honor a Prisoner of War from World War II, Ray Knisley, Jr. Born in Massachusetts, Mr. Knisley served in the U.S. Army and was captured by the Nazi Army.

Mr. Knisley served as a medical aid man with the 117th Cavalry Reconnaissance Squadron. While encamped near the German border of Alsace Lorraine on New Year's Eve, 1944, his entire unit was overrun and he was taken prisoner. For the next several months, Mr. Knisley was transferred between several prisoner camps, finally being rescued by the Russian Army on April 28, 1945.

Following World War II, Mr. Knisley raised his family in Massachusetts. He and his wife have five children, nine grand children and six great grand children. In 1985 Mr. Knisley moved to West Palm Beach, where he worked as a volunteer at the local Veterans Affairs Hospital for twenty years. He specialized in working with fellow prisoners of war; eventually assisting more than two hundred former POWs receive a one hundred percent disability rating. He recently moved to Chiefland about a year ago.

Mr. Speaker, prisoners of war like Ray Knisley, Jr. should be recognized for their service to our nation and for their commitment and sacrifices in battle. With thousands of World War II veterans passing a way each year, it is incumbent on all Americans to hear their stories and preserve their memories. Ray Knisley, Jr. should know that we truly consider him one of America's heroes.

PAYING TRIBUTE TO WILLOW CREEK ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

HON. THOMAS G. TANCREDO

OF COLORADO

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 14, 2006

Mr. TANCREDO. Mr. Speaker, I would like to take this time to honor a school in my district for their academic excellence in being named a Blue Ribbon School.

The schools are selected based on one of two criteria: schools with at least 40 percent of their students from disadvantaged backgrounds that dramatically improve student performance to high levels on state tests; or schools whose students regardless of background, achieve in the top 10 percent of their state on state tests or in the top 10 percent of the Nation on nationally-normed tests.

To receive this recognition, Willow Creek Elementary School has had in each of the past three years over 90 percent of its' students perform at "Proficient" or "Advanced" levels in math and reading. Willow Creek also received this prestigious honor in 1999.

Mr. Speaker, it is my distinct pleasure to honor the students of Willow Creek Elementary School as recipients of the No Child Left Behind—Blue Ribbon Schools Award.

IN MEMORY OF ROBERT GRAY

HON. MICHAEL C. BURGESS

OF TEXAS

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Tuesday, November 14, 2006

Mr. BURGESS. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to remember Robert Allen Gray who passed away after 90 glorious years on Friday, September 22, 2006.

Mr. Gray will forever be remembered by family and friends as a man of integrity and strong values. In his lifetime, he experienced many of the major events in the last century, including the Great Depression and as a soldier in the United States Army during World War II.

In his civilian life, Mr. Gray was an engineer. He was interested in working on cars as well as watching the Indianapolis 500. Mr. Gray's enthusiasm for engineering was closely followed by a passion for gardening. His love of nature was given to him by his father, a florist. Mr. Gray has passed this passion on to his children and grandchildren.

As a family man, Mr. Gray will always be remembered as affectionate and caring. He was the caregiver for many of his elderly aunts and helped his wife as she struggled with Alzheimer's disease. As a father, Mr. Gray was committed to teaching his children and grandchildren the importance of respecting and caring for others.

I extend my sympathies to his family and friends. May this man, whose displays of compassion and love touched the hearts of so many, be an inspiration to us all.